

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 3279

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KE

SUBJ: STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE ON THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF KARIUKI
ASSASSINATION

1. IN WHAT HAS BECOME ANNUAL EVENT, NAIROBI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED MARCH 2 OF MARK (3RD) ANNIVERSARY OF ASSASSINATION OF POPULAR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, J.M. KARIUKI. CHANTING "J.M., J.M." OUTSIDE RESIDENCE HALLS, SMALL NUMBER OF ACTIVISTS ATTRACTED PARTICIPATION OF SEVERAL HUNDRED OTHER STUDENTS WHO WERE THEN EATING BREAKFAST. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, POLICE RIOT SQUADS CONVERGED ON AREA AND BROKE UP GROUP WITH TEAR GAS. SMALL GROUPS OF STUDENTS WERE SEEN LATER IN DAY IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF CITY CHANTING KARIUKI'S NAME. ONE FACULTY SOURCE ON MAIN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS REPORTED THAT STUDENTS HURLED ROCKS THROUGH WINDOWS OF UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS, AND THAT POLICE AND RETALIATED BY CLUBBING CAPUTRED ACTIVISITS WITH STICKS. STUDENTS, WHO HAD PARTICIPATED IN MORNING DEMONSTRATION AT RESIDENCE HALLS, TOLD EMBOFF, HOWEVER, THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO VIOLENCE THERE EITHER BY STUDENTS OR POLICE. AS OF 10 A.M. LOCAL TIME UNITS OF RIOT POLICE HAD CORDONED OFF RESIDENCE HALLS AREA AND WERE EMPLACED IN SMALL GROUPS AROUND CAMPUS. STUDENTS MAINTAINED EFFECTIVE BOYCOTT OF CLASSES THROUGHOUT DAY.

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2. DEMONSTRATIONS WERE PRECEDED OVER PAST FEW DAYS BY CIRCULATION ON CAMPUS OF LEAFLETS ATTACKING GOVERNMENT FOR REPRESSION OF THOSE WHO ATTEMPT TO ARTICULATE CONSCIOUSNESS OF MASSES. ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT KENYATTA NOT ATTACKED BY NAME, IT QUITE CLEAR THAT SEVERAL COMMENTS ON LEAFLETS AIMED DIRECTLY AT HIM.

3. COMMENT: IN ALL LIKELIHOOD CAMPUS WILL RETURN TO NORMAL TOMORROW. MANY STUDENTS, NOT NORMALLY ACTIVISTS, WERE DEEPLY OFFENDED BY DETENTION OF NOVELIST NGUGI WA THIONGO IN DECEMBER, 1977 (DURING CHRISTMAS VACATION), AND THIS WAS FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS DISCONTENT WITH THAT AND WITH INHIBITED ATMOSPHERE WHICH HAS PREVAILED ON CAMPUS SINCE WA THIONGO'S ARREST. LARGE MAJORITY OF THESE STUDENTS, HOWEVER, ARE UNLIKELY TO RISK THEIR PERSONAL FUTURES BY CARRYING DEMONSTRATIONS BEYOND WHAT HAS BECOME A LOST LEGITIMATE OCCASION (ANNIVERSARY OF KARIUKI'S DEATH) FOR EXPRESSION OF PENT-UP HOSTILITY BY STUDENTS.

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